

## XXIII.—NOTES ON BIRDS IN BALUCHISTAN

On April 5, 1929, at about 10,200 feet, I saw a pair of Scarlet Minivets (*Pericrocotus speciosus*) on the crest of the Kaisarghar Range, which is the western half of the Takht-i-Suliman massif. They were moving very slowly along the crest, so (as it is the provincial boundary) sometimes in Baluchistan, sometimes in the North-West Frontier Province. They were evidently looking for a nesting site in the Chilgoza Pines (*Pinus longifolia*) which grow there in profusion, and spent a good quarter of an hour within a dozen feet of me in the tree above my head. These birds have not previously been recorded from this part of India.

Then, in August, I saw many Black Tits (*Lophophanes rufonuchalis*) at Shinghar, at 8,000 feet. This bird is also not recorded from Baluchistan. They appear to be a new race<sup>1</sup>, lacking the buff spots on the wing, and I have sent a specimen to the Society, together with a Rock Nuthatch (*Sitta tephronota*) from the same hill. Both these skins were a good deal knocked about, I regret to say, as I only had No. 5 shot.

Other birds of note which I have seen are White-necked Storks (*Dissoura episcopa*) of which only one specimen is recorded from Sind, and, as far as I can ascertain, none from Baluchistan. I saw five of these birds at Murgha for several days in the first half of last March. (Forty or fifty Green Plover, were with them.) I saw fourteen of these storks on March 2, 1930, and nine the previous Sunday, on the Zhob River five miles from Fort Sandeman.

Several hundred pelicans were driven down on to the hills between Ziarat and Loralai by bad weather in February, 1929, and many were killed with sticks by local Pathans. They would appear to have belonged to the species *Pelecanus crispus*.

I have also to note the arrival of a flock of about thirty Common Teal at Murgha on August 2, 1929. This I think is the earliest arrival date on record. They were there for 24 hours and local Pathans stated that they, or another flock, had been there for the two previous days, in the same flooded fields.

FORT SANDEMAN,  
March 8, 1930.

C. H. STOCKLEY,  
Lt.-Col.

XXIV.—OCCURRENCE OF THE WHITETHROAT  
(*SYLVIA CURRUCA HALIMODENDII*)  
IN THE PUNJAB

On December 9, 1928, I secured a solitary Whitethroat which was haunting some *Farash* trees (*Tamarix articulata*) outside the Rest House at Roda in the Shahpur District (Punjab). Roda is situated in the *Thal* (desert) area between the Jhelum and the Indus. This bird, a male, has now been identified by Mr. H. Whistler as *Sylvia curruca halimodendii*, a Central Asian race of

<sup>1</sup> The bird in question was submitted to Dr. C. B. Ticehurst for examination who states that the bird obtained by Col. Stockley is a young example of the above-named Tit. EDs.

the Lesser Whitethroat. Mr. Whistler informs me that there is no previous record of this race from India proper, but that Hotson collected a female on the 31st January 1917 at Nur Mahomed, 22 miles north-west of Chaharbar in Baluchistan. He adds that in colour it is very similar to *minula* but is larger, the size of *affinis*.

RAWALPINDI,  
PUNJAB,  
April 8, 1930.

H. W. WAITE,  
Indian Police.

XXV.—THE AMANDAVAT (*AMANDAVA AMANDAVA*)  
IN MESOPOTAMIA

Captain H. F. Stoneham of Kenya Colony has recently sent me two wings of a supposed warbler which he obtained at Baiji in 1918 and which he had put away and forgotten about. These wings are certainly not warbler's wings and correspond exactly with those of a juvenile Amandavat (*Amandava amandava*).

On further correspondence he writes 'The wings from Baiji are absolutely authentic. I remember the occasion and so you can rely on the record with absolute certainty. There were several birds about . . . in some long grass between cultivation and the river'.

It is of course possible that amandavats have been introduced into Mesopotamia as they have elsewhere. Information about the species in Mesopotamia is desirable.

APPLEDORE, KENT.

CLAUDE B. TICEHURST.

XXVI.—OCCURRENCE OF THE WHITE-HEADED OR  
STIFF-TAILED DUCK (*ERISMATURA LEUCOCEPHALA*)  
IN THE N.W.F.P.

A party of three guns, Mr. J. G. Dunn, Mr. S. Weller, and myself left Wazirabad at about 5.30 a.m. and proceeded *via* Khanki to a place known as Garjargola. Last year this spot had given us some very good sport.

We arrived there to find that there was next to no sport to be had as the water had almost vanished.

From Garjargola we went about another ten miles further along the Lower Chenab Canal looking for duck, and eventually shot one Gadwall and one Teal. Owing to the scarcity of sport we decided to return to Khanki and try some fighting on the river.

We must have arrived at Khanki near 4 p.m. and walked along the head-works making enquiries regarding the shooting to be had. A workman pointed out two birds swimming in the backwater caused by the closing of the sluices. The birds were ridiculously close in, and watching them I said that they were Grebes. We must have watched them for nearly one hour. They would swim up to the current, hold steady there for a couple of minutes and then return to the slack water near the sluices. They swam very low in the water, with their tails raised, and heads placed low on the back. Once again I said that they were Grebes, but Mr. Weller